(c) whether the new scheme would benefit only the policy-holders of the Corporation,

(d) whether a similar scheme introduced earlier has been discontinued by Government; and

(e) if so, what are the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI JANARDHAN POOJARI): (a) The Government has recently allowed LIC to go ahead with its public housing scheme. The scheme is limited to policy-holders.

(b) and (c) Under the scheme, the LIC will construct houses/flats on plots owned by them subject to demand. These houses/flats will be made available to the policyholders on sale. The policyholders may also be given long-term loans by the LIC for this purpose under its mortgage scheme.

(d) and (e) The earlier scheme was temporarily kept in abeyance due to the proposed reorganisation of LIC.

Strengthening of Handloom Sector

779. SHRI K. VASUDEVA PANICKER: Will the Minister of SUPPLY AND TEXTILES be pleased to state:

(a) whether any steps have recently been taken by Government to strengthen the handloom sector in the country;

(b) if so, what are the details thereof; and

(c) what measures are being taken by Government to ensure timely and adequate supply of yarn to the handloom weavers all over the country?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF SUPPLY AND TEXTILES (SHRI CHANDRA SHEKHAR SINGH): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) Details are as follows:

For the protection of the handloom sector a separate legislation entitled "Handlooms (Reservation of Articles for Production) Act, 1985" has already been enacted. Besides, Welfare measures for the hondloom weavers like Thrift Fund and Workshed-cum-Housing Scheme have already been announced and are being taken up. The production of janata cloth in the handloom sector has been augmented by providing additional target of 50 million square metres for the year 1985-86.

Besides, in the context of the new Textile Policy announced in June, 1985 greater emphasis is proposed to be laid on the modernisation of looms and adequate arrangements for ensuring swift and smooth transfer of technology from the research institutions. Special efforts would also be made to ensure adequate availability of raw materials at reasonable prices to the handloom weavers through the operations of National Handloom Development Corporation.

(c) The National Handloom Development Corporation has already opened yarn depots at Guwahati and Bihar-Shahif. The Corporation is also supplying yarn directly to the State Handloom agencies in the State of Kerala, Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh and the Union Territory of Pondicherry. The Corporation is working out a scheme to supply yarn to handloom weavers at reasonable prices.

Non-functioning of Clearing House of RBI in Ahmedabad

780. SHRI CHIMANBHAI MEHTA: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Clearing House of the Reserve Bank of